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Following is text (unnecessary words omitted) of John Finney article in January 7 New York Times:

DEF 12 ISR-FR

BEGIN TEXT: Israel Said to Buy Missiles in France.

American officials believe Israel has entered into secret contract purchase large number of medium-range ballistic missiles being developed by France.

According to information obtained by American officials, initial order was for 30 surface-to-surface missiles. This viewed as first installment in effort build up missile force as counter to growing number ballistic missiles being produced by UAR.

Missiles being purchased by Israel believed to be military version of Diamant rocket under development by France as launcher for space vehicles and to have range of about 500 miles - sufficient to reach Egyptian targets from Israeli launching sites. Purpose of Israeli contract may have been help offset French development costs.

In opinion of American military observers, introduction of missiles not necessarily disturbing step in ME arms race since they could have deterring and stabilizing effect. But move raises in minds of American:

Tel Aviv 561

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(5)

Drafted by: NEA:NE:DLGamon:apr:1/7/66 | Tel. Ext. 2700 | Telegraphic transmission and classification approved by: NE - Harrison M. Symmes

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analysts disturbing questions about Israeli nuclear ambitions.

Without nuclear warheads missiles would have little military value since they need mass destructive power to compensate for inaccuracy. Purchase of missiles is seen as indicative of Israeli intention develop atomic warheads.

Officially, GOI maintains it has no intention develop atomic weapons. In opinion many American experts, however, Israel is keeping open option take atomic step and is building up capability produce atomic weapons if need be.

In closely guarded reactor, built near Beersheeba with French assistance, Israel has capacity to produce enough plutonium for several atomic weapons a year. Appraisal of American officials is Israel probably could produce atomic device within two years, but without foreign technical assistance it might take her several more years develop advanced, light-weight warhead needed to arm ballistic missiles.

That Israel should have turned to French, who are still in early stages of missile development, is not too surprising since they have been one of her principal foreign sources for arms.

With exception of some Hawk antiaircraft missiles, US has ~~been~~ generally declined supply arms to Israelis and had encouraged them turn to other Western sources. Indirectly, nevertheless, US may help subsidize Israeli purchase with pending surplus food agreement, since to extent that Israel is able obtain food with her own currency, she will have more foreign currency reserves available for arms purchases.

RUSK

In turning to France for missiles, Israel's obvious desire is to counter missile buildup in UAR which, with help of West German scientists, has developed three different types of medium range missiles with ranges extending from 200 to 600 miles. Current Israeli estimate is that Egyptians have 80 to 90 missiles, with production still continuing at manufacturing center near ~~XXXXXX~~ Heliopolis.

Israeli military authorities have not viewed Egyptian missiles as too serious threat since they are believed to be highly inaccurate. Furthermore, UAR is far behind Israel in atomic capability.

On basis some experimental Egyptian use of poison gas in Yemen, there is speculation in highly placed American intelligence and military circles that Cairo is considering arming missiles with canisters of poison gas. As military weapon, missiles would have limited destructiveness, but could be impressive terror weapon in highly unstable ME situation. END TEXT.

END